

and the evil at its heart. In the ranks of that regime are men whose idea of courage is to brutalize unarmed prisoners. They wage attacks while posing as civilians. They use real civilians as human shields. They pretend to surrender, then fire upon those who show them mercy. This band of war criminals has been put on notice: The day of Iraq's liberation will also be a day of justice.

And in the early stages of this war, we have also seen the honor of the American military and our coalition. Protecting innocent civilians is a central commitment of our war plan. Our enemy in this war is the Iraqi regime, not the people who have suffered under it. As we bring justice to a dictator, today we started bringing humanitarian aid in large amounts to an oppressed land.

We are treating Iraqi prisoners of war according to the highest standards of law and decency. Coalition doctors are working to save the lives of the wounded, including Iraqi soldiers. One of our servicemen said this about the injured Iraqis he treated: "We can't blame them for the mistreatment that their Government is doing to our soldiers. I'm all for treating them. That's what we do. That's our job."

Our entire coalition has a job to do, and it will not end with the liberation of Iraq. We will help the Iraqi people to find the benefits and assume the duties of self-government. The form of those institutions will arise from Iraq's own culture and its own choices. Yet, this much is certain: The 24 million people of Iraq have lived too long under a violent criminal gang calling itself a government.

Iraqis are a good and gifted people. They deserve better than a life spent bowing before a dictator. The people of Iraq deserve to stand on their feet as free men and women, the citizens of a free country.

This goal of a free and peaceful Iraq unites our coalition. And this goal comes from the deepest convictions of America. The freedom you defend is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not American's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity.

The Army Special Forces define their mission in a motto: "To Liberate the Op-

pressed." Generations of men and women in uniform have served and sacrificed in this cause. Now the call of history has come once again to all in our military and to all in our coalition. We are answering that call. We have no ambition in Iraq except the liberation of its people. We ask no reward except a durable peace. And we will accept no outcome short of complete and final success.

The path we are taking is not easy, and it may be long. Yet we know our destination. We will stay on the path, mile by mile, all the way to Baghdad and all the way to victory.

Thank you all. And may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:42 a.m. in Hangar 3. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, combatant commander, Lt. Gen. Michael P. DeLong, USMC, deputy commander, and Maj. Kenneth Stone, USAF, chaplain, U.S. Central Command; Gen. Charles R. Holland, USAF, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command; Col. David "Tanker" Snyder, USAF, commander, 6th Air Mobility Wing; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor Richard M. Baker of St. Petersburg, FL; Mayor Brian Aungst of Clearwater, FL; Mayor Dick A. Greco of Tampa, FL; country music entertainers Toby Keith and Darryl Worley; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on Congressional Action on the Budget Resolution**

*March 26, 2003*

I commend the Senate Republican leadership for its commitment to jobs and growth and for acting quickly to pass a budget resolution, in sharp contrast to last year when the Senate did not even pass such a resolution. It is unfortunate that the full Senate has failed to pass a budget that provides for my entire economic growth-and-job creation plan. The House budget took the bold steps necessary to boost our economy, and we will work to ensure that the final House-Senate budget provides the growth measures American workers deserve.

### **Statement on the Death of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan**

*March 26, 2003*

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Senator Moynihan was an intellectual pioneer and a trusted adviser to Presidents of both parties. I appreciated his service to my administration as Co-Chairman of my Commission to Strengthen Social Security. Representing the people of New York for 24 years, Senator Moynihan was a leader in the Senate and was recognized for his commitment to free trade, Social Security, freedom for people around the world, and equal opportunity for all Americans. He committed his life to service and will be sorely missed. We express our deepest sympathies to Senator Moynihan's family.

### **Proclamation 7656—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2003**

*March 26, 2003*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Our Nation has an important responsibility to create a caring environment in which our children can flourish and reach their full potential. As we observe the 20th anniversary of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we recognize the significant progress we have made to increase the safety and security of our children. We also renew our commitment to protecting our most vulnerable citizens from harm. Child abuse and neglect are national tragedies, and we must work together to eradicate them.

Every day, thousands of children are mistreated by their parents, guardians, relatives, or caregivers. On average, three children a day die as a result of abuse and neglect, and countless others remain silent, their pain unnoticed and unreported. These children face challenges that no child deserves, and young people who have experienced abuse may grow into adults who are self-destructive and damaging to our communities. To help these children become healthy and happy adults,

parents and caregivers must provide them with love, security, emotional support, and a strong connection to their extended families and communities.

To help ensure the safety and well-being of our children, my Administration is committed to supporting and strengthening families. In the last year, we have worked with faith-based and community organizations to promote healthy marriages, responsible fatherhood, and partnerships that seek to prevent child abuse and neglect. We also worked with the Congress to reauthorize the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. This year, we are asking the Congress to fully fund this program at \$505 million, an increase of more than 65 percent. In addition, we are working with the Congress to reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. This important legislation will provide funding to States for child abuse prevention activities and other vital programs.

Every child is a blessing. Through the cooperation of Federal, State, and local governments, faith-based and community organizations, schools, law enforcement, and health and human service agencies, we can develop and enhance successful prevention strategies that protect our young people. In addition, we must continue to recognize the spirit of compassion in individuals and community groups across our Nation that offer care, guidance, and support for young people, parents, and caregivers. By working together, we can put hope in our children's hearts and ensure healthy and safe lives for all our children.

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2003 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I encourage all Americans to join together to support strong families, protect our children from abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, and make our Nation a more promising place for all.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of